

I am proud to represent the nine, federally-recognized Lakota, Nakota, and Dakota tribes of South Dakota. The federal government has a unique responsibility to federally-recognized tribes. This government-to-government relationship is established by our founders in the U.S. Constitution, recognized through hundreds of treaties, and reaffirmed through executive orders, judicial decisions, and congressional actions.

In Congress, it is my priority to ensure that the federal government respects tribal sovereignty and upholds its trust responsibility. I continue to work on many fronts to improve conditions in Indian Country, including:

Tribal Law Enforcement and Justice

The federal government has a responsibility to public safety in Indian Country, but all too often, the government fails to provide the officers, equipment, and other resources necessary to keep tribal communities safe. Nationwide, less than 3,000 law enforcement officers patrol more than 56 million acres of Indian Country, which reflects less than one-half of the law enforcement presence in comparable rural communities nationwide. As a result, the crime rates are startlingly high, including the fact that Native women are 2.5 times more likely than non-Native women to suffer sexual abuse during their lifetimes.

In April 2009, I introduced H.R.1924, Tribal Law and Order Act, which would begin to address many systemic flaws within the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Department of Justice that have led to these problems. Furthermore, improving public safety requires federal investment in tribal courts, jails, juvenile detention facilities, rehabilitation programs, officer recruitment and retention, and other necessary components. I continue to work closely with tribal leaders and my colleagues in Congress to continue to address this complex problem.

Health Care

The Indian Health Service (IHS) is charged with providing healthcare to Native Americans. I continue to work with my colleagues in the House to reauthorize the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, which would modernize the Indian Health Service and would authorize much-needed resources to Native communities to address health care needs. Furthermore, I support efforts to fully fund the Indian Health Service, as many IHS units are funded at less than 50 percent of their level of need.

Education

Today's students are tomorrow's leaders, and we must invest in all levels of education in our public schools and Bureau of Indian Education schools. We must continue to consider barriers facing Bureau of Indian Education schools in improving student achievement under No Child Left Behind. Furthermore, we must address the school construction needs of many reservations, as schools across Indian Country need significant maintenance and repair.

Economic Development and Renewable Energy

South Dakota tribes are working to strengthen their economies through a variety of economic development activities, and the federal government should continue to look for ways to support these initiatives. In particular, tribal reservations in South Dakota are blessed with an abundance of renewable energy potential, especially wind energy. I support legislation that would enable tribes to transfer any production tax credits to partnering entities in order to spur further wind development in Indian Country. I will continue to work with tribal leaders to address the challenges they encounter as the work to improve the economic conditions in their communities.

[Back](#)